BENCH MARKING AND ISO: A COMPARITIVE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Bench marking and ISO are two of the methods of ensuring high quality in the processes, systems, and management of the organizations or institutions. "Benchmarking is about bridging the gap between where we are and where we want to be" (Edward Sallis). An ISO is a "system of continuous improvement employing participative management and centered on the needs of customers". (Jurow and Barnard 1993). This paper explains about benchmarking types, process, comparison of benchmarking and ISO. Itdiscusses how to adopt benchmarking and ISO standards and also its benefits in a college library. Conclusion gives the brief merits and demerits of both the systems of Total Quality Management.

KEYWORDS: Benchmarking; ISO- International Organization for Standardization; TQM- Total Quality Management

INTRODUCTION

The Essence of bench marking is the process of borrowing ideas and adapting them to gain competitive advantage. It is a tool for continuous improvement. It is a systematic method by which organization can measure themselves against the best institutional practices. It promotes superior performance by providing an organized framework through which organization learn how the " best in class" do things and understands how these best practices differ from their own. It is a popular tool of TQM, used extensively by both manufacturing and service organization.

International Organization for Standardization (ISO) is an international standard setting body composed of various national standard organizations. It is a non-governmental organization providing standards in eight clauses; scope, Normative references, definitions, Quality Management systems, Management responsibility, Resource management, Product/ service Realization and measurement analysis and improvement. The primary reason is that customer or marketing are demanding compliance to a quality system. Other reasons are the need of improvement in processes or systems and a desire for global improvement/deployment of products and services.

The ISO quality standard requires any organization to document their quality systems. It should have the manual of documented procedures. Documentation of each and every service should be reached. Record must be kept and periodic auditing has to be performed on each section in the procedures. ISO Certification brings worldwide recognition, telling other an organization is quality driven. It brings serious advantage over other competitors. The Other benefit of ISO quality standard is aimed at increasing quality, decreasing mistakes, decreasing returns and increasing customer satisfaction.

Definitions: Bench marking and ISO

Bench marking is the process of measuringproducts, services and processes against those of organization known to be leaders in their industry. Benchmarking provides necessary insights to understand and compare an organization with another organization with similar features. A measurement of the quality of an organization policy, products, programs strategies etc are compared with standard measurements of its peers.

ISO is a "system of continuous improvement employing participative management and centered on the needs of customers". (Jurow and Barnard 1993). Key components of ISO are employee involvement and training, problem solving, statistical methods, long term goals and thinking and recognition. Implementing ISO is in four ways. 1. Breaking down interdepartmental barriers. 2. Redefining the beneficiaries of library services as internal customers. 3. (Staff) and external customers (Patrons). 4. Reaching a state of continuous improvement.

"ISO is an integrated organization approach in delighting customers (Both internal and external) by meeting their expectations on a continuous basis through everyone involved with the organization working on continuous improvement in all products services and processes along with proper problem solving methodology". Suresh Dalela B S., (1999). ISO 9000-a manual for total quality management

Types of Bench Marking and ISO

There are eight types of bench marking, Technical benchmarking and competitive bench marking.

- **Technical Benchmarking:** Performed by design, staff as to ascertain the capabilities of products or services, especially in comparison to the products or services of leading competitors.

- **Competitive Benchmarking:** Compare how well an organization is doing well with respect to the leading competition, especially with attributes, functions or products or services.

- **Process Benchmarking:** It focuses on the business processes, and observes the best practices from one or more benchmarking firms.

- **Financial Benchmarking**: Financial analysis and comparing with the competitors are executed here.

- **Performance Benchmarking:** Performance of your own organization with the other best target competitor.

- **Product Benchmarking:** designing of new products are compared with the strength and weaknesses of the other competitors.

- **Strategic Benchmarking:** Observing how others compete better, it is best to observe other industries for betterment.

- **Functional Benchmarking:** It focuses on a single function to improve the performances of that particular function alone.

ISO Types are

- 1987-- ISO 9000 family consist first edition ISO9001, ISO9002, ISO9003…

- 1994--ISO 9001:2008= revisions of a customer focus and better determined.

- 2000--ISO 9000:2005= ISO9000,9001,9004 priority to process approach and customer satisfaction

- 2008--ISO 9004:2009= focuses on how to make a quality management system more efficient and effective.

- ISO 19011:2011= sets out guidance on internal and external audits of quality management systems.

Processes of Bench Making and ISO

Organizations that benchmark adapt the process to best fit for their own need and culture. The numbers of steps in the processes vary from organization to organization. The following six steps are

- Decide what to bench mark

- Understand current performance

- Plan

- Study others

- Learn from the data

- Use the findings.

http://iso-qms.blogspot.com/
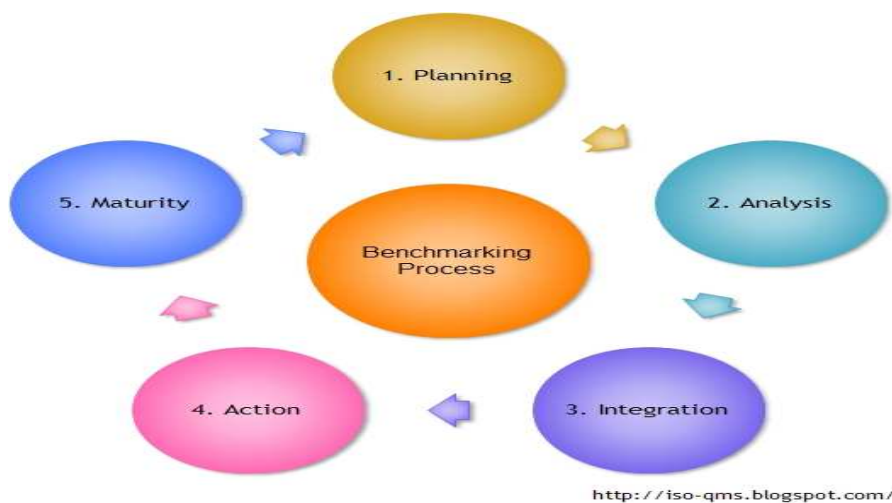
Figure 1: Benchmarking Processes

Depending upon the size of the organization and the complexity of the process the following steps are described to implement an ISO 9001:2008 quality management system successfully.

- Top management commitment

- Establish a team to implement.

- Awareness program on ISO

- First initial status survey and provide training

- Documented implementation plan

- Documentation of procedures

- Document control and implementation

- Management review and Internal quality audit

- Certification audit and certification

- Registration and Continual improvement
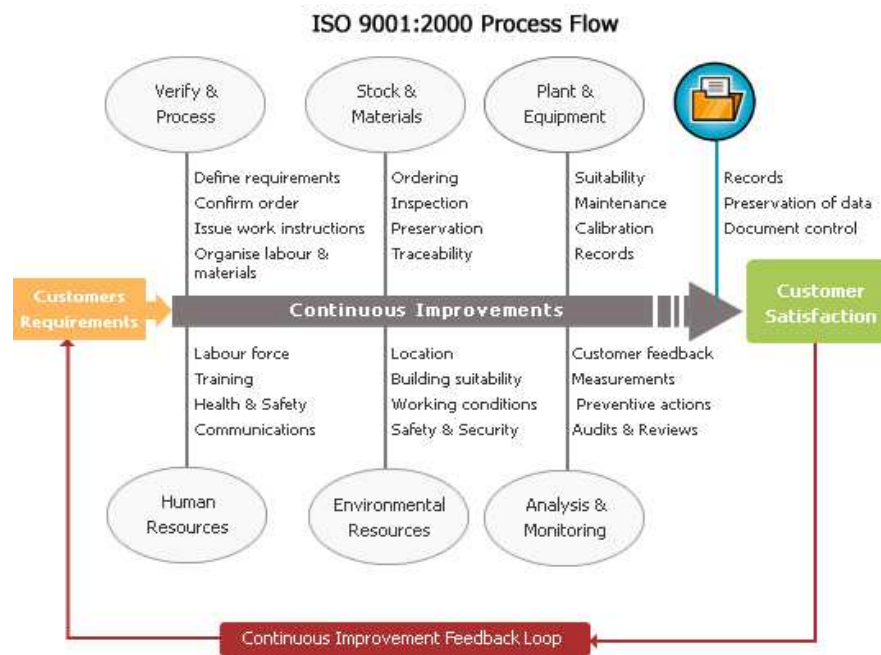
Figure 2: ISO 9001 Process Flow

Figure 3: ISO 9001 Benefits

Comparison of Bench Marking and ISO Processes

Table 1

10 Steps of Bench Marking	10 Steps of ISO
1. Identify the Problematic area, what is to be benchmarked	1.Top management commitment
2. Identify comparative organization that has similar processes	2.Establish a team to implement ISO
3. Determine the data collection method and collect data	3.Awareness program on ISO
4. Determine the current performance level	4. Initial survey and provide training to employees
5. Project future performance levels	5.Documented implementation plan
6.Communicate bench mark findings and gain acceptance	6.Documentation of Procedures
7.Establish functional goals	7.Document control and implementation
8.Develop action goals	8.Management review and internal quality audit
9. Implement specific action and monitor progress	9. Certification audit
10.Recalibrate bench marks	10. Registration and continual improvement

Adopting Bench marking and ISO standards and its benefits in a college library:

Implementing the bench marking and ISO standard procedure along with the institution makes the library to grow as per the objectives. The comparative development through bench marking and ISO in a library is given for better understanding.

Table 2

Benefits of Bench marking	Benefits of ISO
1. Identifying the problematic area for which the bench marking has to be carried out. Ex. Automated Circulation 2. Identify the college which has done the automation work 3. Data collected on the different types of software. 4. Estimates the current situation in the library 5. Estimating the future automated circulation 6. Communicating the other top level college library automated systems and get acceptance to purchase a new software 7. List the functions that has to be carried out 8. Appoint persons to do the action plan of implementing automation. 9. Implement the automated circulation 10. Go for other bench marking procedure. 11. Satisfaction is achieved in only one section. No continual improvement is seen in benchmarking.	1. Top management commitment in implementing ISO standard in the institution brings commitment in library also. 2. Establish a team in a library to bring ISO 3. Awareness program for all library staff. 4. Send library personals for training program. 5. Teaching others to implement the ISO standards in the library 6. Procedures are written for all the works in the library and implementing new services also added. 7. Control copy and apex copy manual is kept aside for implementing. 8. Management reviews the procedures and internal quality audit on the works is done. 9. External audit for ISO certification 10. Customer satisfaction is achieved by complete growth in every section of the library. 11. Continual improvement is achieved in all the sections of the library as the ISO is based on the International Standards.

CONCLUSIONS

- Benchmarking first identifies the problematic area and compares with the other standard organization procedure. Whole organization is involved in getting ISO for the entire growth of the organization or the library.

- It is an informal communication method to collect the information of the problematic area and discusses with other competitors informally, whereas ISO works in formal communication mode and discusses matters as team.

- Data collection from other organization through informal way is difficult and it may not receive it complete information regarding the problem.

- Estimation of current situation in one particular area is done in bench marking, whereas Whole library and its objectives to services are taken in ISO.

- Through informal communication the employee collects information of the competitor and communicating that to the top management is done in the bench marking and training is not included. Whereas in ISO the top management asks its employee to follow the standards of ISO, and training is given to all the employees about the ISO standards, how to implement it in the whole organization.

- No written procedures to carryout functions. In ISO complete procedures are written as per the standards, to carry out the functions effectively.

- No cross check is possible in benchmarking with the received informal information. Internal quality audits are carried out to eradicate the problems in each and every section of the organization or library.

- Employees complete the benchmarking work and report to the organization. In ISO The organization go for the external quality audit and gets ISO certification for complete growth.

- Only one section of the work is compared with the local standard of the competitor, whereas in ISO international standard is achieved for the whole organization. Library as a part of the organization enjoys the benefit of ISO with pride. All the sections of the library get good ISO procedure and work has been executed in ISO standard and thereby users' satisfaction is achieved to the greater level.

- Benchmarking is local standard which is available within the reach of the employee. But ISO is an international standard and is the world's largest developer of voluntary international standards.

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